

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 002059

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/20/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#) [RW](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: NKUNDA'S PRESENCE IN NORTH KIVU PROVINCE

Classified By: Ambassador Roger Meece. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

1. (C) Following CODEL Brownback's visit to eastern DRC, the Ambassador traveled Dec. 3 with the MONUC North Kivu Indian Brigade commander to a small forward operating base at Katchanga in the Masisi area of North Kivu. Indian military commanders told the Ambassador the base had been established about two weeks earlier, largely because of the nearby presence of "dissident" Gen. Laurent Nkunda. There is a GDRC arrest warrant outstanding for Nkunda. (Note: Nkunda and Col. Jules Mutebusi led troops under their command to briefly take control of the city of Bukavu, South Kivu, in June, 2004. Nkunda has a long history of alleged human rights abuses and likely war crimes in the DRC's conflict starting in 1996. Many Congolese believe that Nkunda, a Congolese Tutsi, received support in the past from the government of Rwanda. End note).

2. (C) En route to the MONUC camp, the Indian pilots overflew small camps described by the Indian commander as being those of Nkunda's forces. In fact, the helicopter made two passes over what was described as Nkunda's headquarters, a collection of small camps difficult to see from a distance set in a small forested patch. The Ambassador saw and photographed three apparent four-wheel-drive vehicles parked outside of one structure. The Indian military commander further explained that per MONUC information, it appeared that Nkunda himself moved around within the area a good deal, and may not be at the headquarters camp at any given time.

3. (C) Throughout the general area, there were also a substantial number of camps that the Indian commanders explained were those of an ex-ANC (armed wing of the RCD-Goma party) brigade, part of the substantial FARDC forces in the area not yet a part of the national army integration process. The Indians believe that the 2,000 - 3,000 ex-ANC troops in the area would actively resist any operation being conducted to target Nkunda. This in fact is the major obstacle to an immediate operation to arrest Nkunda, with the specter of renewed significant fighting involving the ex-ANC brigade and possibly other forces in the area.

4. (C) At Katchanga camp, the Indian officers briefed that Nkunda and his forces have been relatively quiet causing few security problems in recent weeks. The Nkunda forces, numbering a few hundred, seem to have money available, and are largely buying food, rather than extorting it from local citizens. Local citizens are divided, with some (primarily Kinyarwanda-speaking Congolese) apparently sympathetic to Nkunda; others are not.

5. (C) The Brigade Commander briefed the Ambassador that he has been working with 8th Military District Commander Amisi to put together a plan to go after Nkunda. Both commanders feel that moving elsewhere a significant number of the ex-ANC troops currently camped in the area is key to a successful operation avoiding more generalized potential fighting. Amisi is reportedly working on how to do that. Responding to a specific question, the Indian general said that he believes that Amisi, an ex-ANC general himself, is sincere in this effort. The Indian general was more guarded regarding the position of North Kivu Governor Serufuli, however, characterizing Serufuli only as offering him "overt" cooperation.

6. (C) Comment: It is clear that MONUC and local government forces have good information as to roughly where Nkunda is, and the alignment of forces in the immediate area. The MONUC Brigade Commander appeared confident that eventually an operational plan can be developed with the FARDC Gen. Amisi to go after Nkunda. Taking him on while surrounded by several thousand sympathetic ex-ANC troops, however, would be a mistake. In the meantime, although Nkunda appears to have money to operate, possibly from the substantial funds reportedly emptied from Bukavu banks during the June, 2004 takeover, Nkunda seems to have limited options available. Absent renewed support from Kigali or someone within the DRC such as Governor Serufuli, Nkunda appears unable to stage a major military challenge. If he moves much beyond his base area, he runs a significant risk of being attacked or captured. His arrest would be a welcome development to remove one more of the past, current, and potential future troublemakers in the volatile region, and the MONUC Indian troops are clearly keeping a careful eye on him. End comment.

